

Provisions for Providing Medical Assistance Transportation

The following provisions set forth the Department's policy concerning transportation services provided to Medical Assistance (MA) recipients for the purpose of obtaining necessary medical care and services which can be paid for under the MA program. These provisions set forth the standards which the Department will use in determining when the MA program will pay for transportation and describes the prior authorization process for obtaining payment.

A. Prior Authorization

1. Prior authorization is required for the following:

- a. all transportation to obtain medical care and services, except emergency ambulance transportation or Medicare approved transportation by ambulance service provided to an MA-eligible person who is also eligible for Medicare Part B payments.
- b. transportation expenses of an attendant for the MA recipient.

The provisions set forth the standards to be used in evaluating prior authorization requests and provides the prior authorization official with the authority to deny reimbursement to MA recipients for the use of private vehicles (personal cars) or mass transportation which the recipient uses for the usual activities of daily living. A prior authorization official may approve reimbursement for the use of personal cars or mass transportation, however, if, in the opinion of the prior authorization official, circumstances so warrant.

2. Criteria to be used by the prior authorization official in making prior authorization determinations are:

- a. the MA recipient has access to necessary medical care or services by use of a private vehicle or by means of mass transportation which is used by the recipient for the usual activities of daily living;
- b. the frequency of visits or treatments within a short period of time whereby the recipient would suffer financial hardship if required to make payment for the transportation;
- c. the nature and severity of the MA recipient's illness which necessitates transportation by a mode other than that ordinarily used by the MA recipient;

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- d. the geographic locations of the MA recipient and the provider of medical care and services;
- e. the medical care and services available within the common medical marketing area of the MA recipient's community;
- f. the need to continue a regimen of medical care or service with a specific provider; and,
- g. any other circumstances which are unique to a particular MA recipient and which the prior authorization official determines have an effect on the need for payment of transportation services.

B. Payment

Criteria to be used for establishing payment for medical assistance transportation:

- a. Social services districts have the authority to establish payment rates with vendors of transportation services which will ensure the efficient provision of appropriate transportation for MA recipients in order for the recipients to obtain necessary medical care or services. Social services districts may establish such rates in a number of ways, which may include negotiation with the vendors.
- b. Payment for transportation is only available for transportation to and from providers of necessary medical care and services which can be paid for under the MA program. MA payment for transportation will not be made if the care or services are not covered under the MA program.
- c. MA payment to vendors of transportation services is limited to situations where an MA recipient is actually being transported in the vehicle.
- d. MA payment will not generally be made for transportation which is ordinarily made available to other persons in the community without charge. If federal financial participation is available for the costs of such transportation, the MA program is permitted to pay for the transportation.
- e. Vendors of transportation services must provide pertinent cost data to a social services district upon request or risk termination from participation in the MA program.

Finally, the provisions require social services districts to notify applicants for and recipients of MA of the procedures for obtaining prior authorization of transportation services.

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